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RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0467
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 0002
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UNCLAS BOGOTA 003430

SENSITIVE
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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: SENV AORC KGHG CO
SUBJECT: COLOMBIA: INTERESTED IN HFCS PROPOSAL, BUT NOT SOLD

REF: 09 STATE 095899; 09 BOGOTA 3081

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: Per reftel, Econoffs demarched GOC representatives from the Ministries of Environment (MOE) and Foreign Affairs (MFA) on the U.S./Canada/Mexico proposal to add hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) to the Montreal Protocol. GOC officials showed interest in the proposal, but emphasized that before Colombia could take a position they seek clarification on pending hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) issues, and notably several legal, technical, and economic concerns with the current proposal. GOC officials would welcome the opportunity to meet with USG officials at the upcoming conference. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On October 27, MFA and MOE officials met with Econoffs to outline their concerns about the U.S./Canada/Mexico proposal to add HFCs to the Montreal Protocol. MOE's Javier Camargo highlighted GOC's interest in the proposal, but noted that at the upcoming 21st Meeting of the Parties to the Montreal Protocol, GOC officials will seek first to resolve unfinished business regarding HCFCs. He added that the GOC also plans to discuss its legal, technical, and economic concerns about the current proposal.

¶3. (SBU) Camargo highlighted the GOC's recent success eliminating the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs). On HCFCs, however, Camargo raised three outstanding items: 1) destruction of HCFCs; 2) financial support to eliminate HCFCs; and 3) institutional strengthening for implementation and enforcement. Camargo plans to raise these items at the upcoming meeting, and indicated institutional building could be enhanced by sharing best practices, helping ministries manage the phasedown and destruction of HCFCs.

U.S./Canada/Mexico Proposal

¶4. (SBU) GOC legal concerns are focused on how parties to the Montreal Protocol incorporate gases regulations that are currently under the scope of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol. Econoffs responded using reftel points, but GOC officials wanted more details.

¶ 15. (SBU) The GOC interlocutors raised several technical and economic issues: a request for technology-transfer to help replace HFCs with alternative climate-friendly gases; access to patented technology from other countries (e.g. Japan) that utilizes non-HFC gases; multilateral financing to either develop these new gases or purchase licenses of patented technology; and financing to implement destruction methods of HFCs and accumulated ozone depleting substances (ODS).

¶ 16. (SBU) Camargo raised the increasing technological requirements, as well as higher operational and capital costs, associated with HCFC/HFC-free production. These efforts would require multilateral financial support in order to make private sector implementation viable. Financing would also be needed to support institutional strengthening and guarantee implementation. Camargo highlighted that the destruction of ODS had been included in the Mauritius/Micronesia proposal, but not in the U.S./Canada/Mexico proposal. He opined that it may have to do with financing.

¶ 17. (SBU) Camargo offered to discuss Colombia's views on reftel proposal with USG officials at the November 4-8 Montreal Protocol meeting. He added that the current proposal was timely, particularly since the private sector is likely considering replacing HCFCs with HFCs. More cost-effective alternatives are needed, he stressed. Camargo hoped a roadmap would be developed that takes into consideration pending issues and Colombia's concerns regarding the current proposal. As an aside, Camargo noted that Colombia's issues are in line with those of other countries in the region.

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